

Public Schools and Negro

Public School, as we know it in North, most democratic institution in the American experiment.

Cardinal principles of the school:

1. Develop better health of society through only integrated agency dealing with all of society.
2. Give command of fundamental processes: "readin' writin' and 'rithmetic"
3. Develop vocational efficiency (attitudes as well as skills).
4. Create worthy home members.
5. Build better citizens through recognition of common aims and responsibilities.
6. Teach worthy uses of leisure time.
7. Refine ethical character and enrich social relationships for the common good.

In the Ideal State:-

The school which does not meet these challenges - the teacher who does not observe these landmarks of educational profession, fail in their tasks.

The greater the distance from the attainment of these ideals, a group in public schools may be - the greater the task confronting the school in aiding these children hurdle the obstacles.

The more serious the social and economic problems of the minority group - the more study, understanding, and encouragement should come from the school.

Whether or not New Jersey Schools fulfill their responsibility to the Negro minority, particularly, is the subject of this discussion.

To begin with, let us assume that the average teacher having Negro children in the classroom, looks

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upon them as a "problem" in one way or another.

1. They are more sensitive or touchy - you must be careful what you say.
2. They are slower to learn
3. They are less cooperative in classroom relationships
4. They are much more violent in expressing resentment whether the expression be overt or covert.
5. Their presence in the classroom seems to breed greater discord and conflict.
6. They do not maintain a standard of personal hygiene
7. Their parents are not cooperative - rather they are resentful and belligerent in excusing the faults of their children.
8. They are boisterous, crude and over-assertive.

Not one of these charges indicates a racial characteristic or quality - each can be found among individuals of any and all other racial or ethnic groups. It is probable they are found more frequently among Negroes.

Whenever found, these factors will be in the background regardless of the racial group represented:

1. Immediate cultural background and current environment.
2. Economic status of the family group and social outlook.
3. Direct defense against prejudiced offensive from outside.
4. Personality distortion - inferiority complex.

Let's analyze these factors as they relate to the Negro - but in the meantime, also compare these analyses with similar situations involving Tony Cantalucci, Abie Cohen or Stan Kowalski.

I. CULTURAL BACKGROUND - current environment.

Roughly, 75% of Essex County Negroes from South since 1918.

They were the sharecroppers, tenant farmers, itinerant laborers, miners, and steel mill workers of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Georgia mainly.

They came from a section of Democratic America which created many of the refined tortures so helpful to Hitler today.

They came to N. J. for three major reasons, as several surveys have determined:

1. Seeking better jobs and higher wages
2. Seeking better schools and homes for their children.
3. To escape the discrimination and disfranchisement of the South.

Their coming was no new social phenomenon to New Jersey - experienced repeatedly for the past century - Irish, Pole and Russian - Italian and others

Differed only in intensity of feeling and the inability of Negroes to shake off pigmentation as the others did their foreign airs and language.

Instead of coming from County Clare, the Ukraine or Sicily, these new immigrants were native-born Americans from one of the oldest of American stock.

They should be literate, thoroughly Americanized, cultured.
Let's look at the Record:

Journal of Negro Education - Lancaster Press - 1932

Financial Support - P. 109 - 119 - 120 - 122

Physical Equipment - P. 167 "But they're improving"
N. C. 1919-29, P. 168

Pupils per Classroom - P. 175 Length of School P. 268

Deficiency in Classroom Seats. Teacher Salaries - P. 216-220
P. 177

Conclusions P. 193

Many of our children - and great majority of Negro parents -
were exposed to these conditions in preparation for
life. In addition - they've lived in an atmosphere
of complete self-abasement of humiliation, exploitation,
and fear.

Removal from the atmosphere did not automatically supply the
education and culture deprived, nor erase the emotional
scars.

Like European immigrants, the Negro youth is revolting
against parental authority, at the same time he fights
racial barriers.

II. ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK

Instead: - Unemployment and under-employment.

52% of industries closed - 72% of indus. wage under \$20

65% of Newark Negroes in 1st, 7th, and 3rd ward slums.

Poverty, ill-health, social ostracism - their present lot.

III. Direct defense against prejudiced

Offensive - real or fancied.

The Committee from N. S. - Teacher uses "nigger" and "darky."

The class play - soccer, basketball team - swimming.

Rationalized by whites - deadly insult to Negro.

"less than human" - inferior

"Little Black Sambo."

"Tolerate that action from you." (You means Nigger)
seemingly insignificant, subtle digs or insults
thoughtlessness, or ill-concealed racial feeling on
part of teacher, readily seen by white and black
children - invitation to whites, and bitter
resentment by Negroes - thence to open conflict between
students.

Ptg. Community house situation.

No. Jersey (continuation) school - white and black girls

IV Personality Distortion - local problems

1. Tom (wh) and Bill (neg)

2. Frank - chronic truant, send South, "unhappy"

3. "em. in suburban school - strong racial feelings

"Neither fish nor fowl."

In daily task, teacher must make decision - to adhere
to cardinal principles for all children - or
assume responsibility for furthering ill-will and
conflict;

To be consciously, studiously, Christian
American and democratic

or To develop still further the pagan philosophy
of racial inferiority and the doctrines of
force and numbers.

One Further Thought: Vocational Counselling.

17,500 occupations - Negroes somewhere in majority of them.

Is our counselling limited by what we see in our local
Community?

15 - 25 Drs, Nurse, Dent. etc.

or are we seeking information.

Do we tell Negro girls they can't be stenographers?

Our experience.

Flight of Negro in Defense Industry.

Rule: Negro has same vocational or occupational potentialities
as any other, if talent is there; although local
or immediate probabilities are scarce or even lacking.

We are not training youth for

HERE and NOW

We are training for ANYWHERE and ULTIMATELY.

In this short-sighted guidance plan, are found many and
serious frustrations and dislocations to individuals --
and retardation for an entire group of hopeful, aspiring American
citizens.

H. A. L.